

## Greater Cambridge Local Plan Strategic Spatial Options Assessment: Landscape & Townscape (November 2020)

### Executive Summary

CBA was commissioned in May 2020 to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment of the Greater Cambridge area as part of the evidence base for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

An Interim Draft Report has been completed in September 2020, which sets out the interim draft findings of the initial desk-based phase of the Landscape Character Assessment study.

Following field studies and further research, the full findings of the Landscape Character Assessment will be set out in a Draft Final Report scheduled to be completed in December 2020.

The appraisal of the strategic spatial options is based on the interim draft findings of the Landscape Character Assessment, which is a work in progress. The conclusions are therefore preliminary and will need to be verified once the study is further developed.

The headline preliminary conclusions at this stage are:

- Overall, all of the strategic spatial options and growth scenarios would result in changes, both negative and positive, in terms of conserving and enhancing the character of Greater Cambridge's landscapes and townscapes, maintaining local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place.
- The Fens, Chalk Hills and River Valleys have sensitive landscape characteristics that are likely to be particularly vulnerable/susceptible to urban development. This may present constraints for higher growth scenarios associated with spatial options in these landscapes as described in the conclusions.
- The smaller historic villages and their landscape settings have sensitive townscape/landscape characteristics that are likely to be particularly vulnerable to change. This may present constraints for higher growth scenarios associated with spatial options focused on the dispersal of growth to existing villages as described in the conclusions.

- The historic townscape character and landscape setting of Cambridge is particularly vulnerable to change. This may present constraints for higher growth scenarios associated with spatial options focused on densification of the city and the edge of Cambridge as described in the conclusions.

#### Recommendations:

- Develop suitable landscape policies in the new Local Plan requiring provision of strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new development around the edges of Cambridge and rural villages in South Cambridgeshire into the surrounding countryside.

## Introduction

### Introduction to evidence base

CBA was commissioned in May 2020 by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council) to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment of the Greater Cambridge area as part of the evidence base for the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The study is due to be completed in December 2020.

The purpose of the study is to develop an up-to-date and consistent assessment of the current character of the Greater Cambridge landscape. Among other things, the study is intended to inform the development of an appropriate spatial strategy and suitable landscape policies for the new Local Plan. It also provides a baseline for monitoring landscape change.

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies, maps and describes distinctive Landscape Character Types and Areas outside of the Cambridge Urban Area. Drawing on evidence provided by existing studies, the Landscape Character Assessment also includes high level townscape character assessments of rural villages within Greater Cambridge and the Cambridge Urban Area.

While the study provides a broad understanding of the key landscape sensitivities of Greater Cambridge's Landscape Character Types/Areas, it should be noted that it is not an assessment of the landscape's sensitivity or susceptibility to a particular development type or scenario.

### Initial findings

The study is a work in progress. An Interim Draft Report has been completed in September 2020, which sets out the interim draft findings of the initial desk-based phase of the Landscape Character Assessment study.

In addition to taking into account feedback from stakeholders following a workshop held on 2nd September 2020, field studies and further research are being undertaken to verify/refine the landscape classification boundaries and the Landscape Character Type descriptions/guidelines, and to inform the preparation of the Landscape Character Area descriptions.

The full findings of the Landscape Character Assessment will be set out in a Draft Final Report scheduled to be completed in early December 2020.

## Assessment of strategic (non-site specific) spatial options

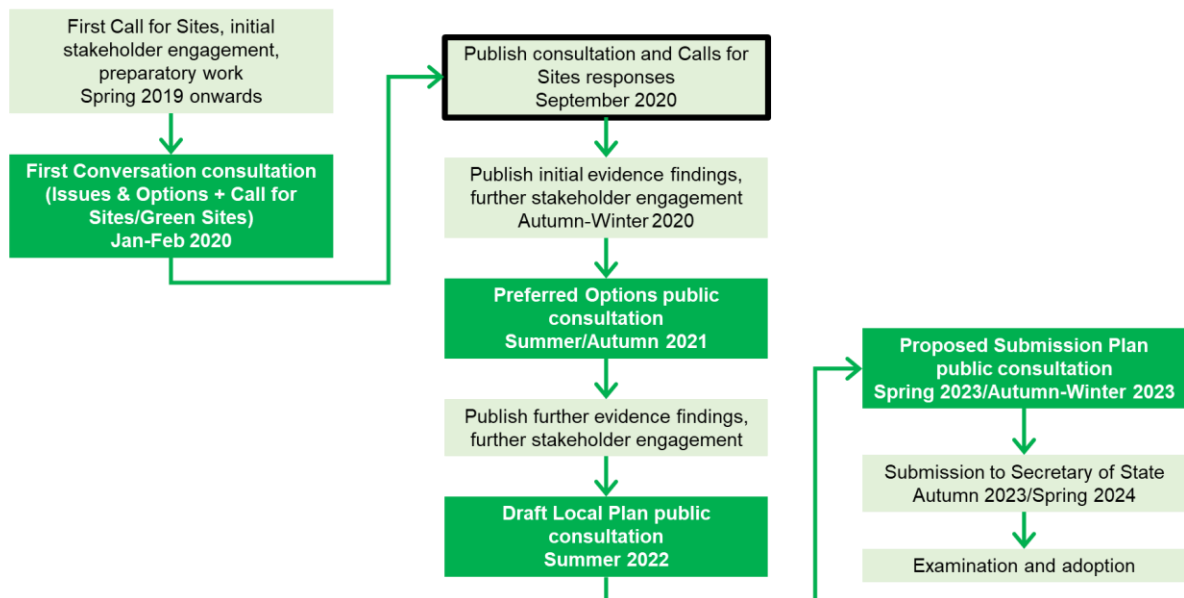
Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council completed public consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Conversation (Issues and Options) in early 2020. Building on the initial options set out in the First Conversation, the Councils have identified three growth level options for homes and jobs and eight strategic (non-site specific) spatial options for testing. Description of the options and explanation of how they were developed is set out in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan: strategic spatial options for testing – methodology document.

The Councils have asked consultants producing Local Plan evidence studies, including the Sustainability Appraisal, to assess the strategic options with regard to their initial evidence findings. This report forms one element of that assessment.

The initial evidence findings will be reported to the Joint Local Plan Advisory Group in autumn 2020, and help to inform further engagement with stakeholders.

Preferred Options public consultation is planned for summer/autumn 2021, including a preferred strategy and draft allocations. The process of Local Plan preparation is set out below.

## Process of Local Plan preparation



## The strategic options

The three growth level options tested through this appraisal are:

- Minimum – standard method homes-led
- Medium – central scenario employment-led
- Maximum – higher employment-led

The spatial scenarios tested through the appraisal are:

- 1 - Densification of existing urban areas
- 2 - Edge of Cambridge – outside the Green Belt
- 3 - Edge of Cambridge – Green Belt
- 4 - Dispersal - new settlements
- 5 - Dispersal – villages
- 6 - Public transport corridors
- 7 - Supporting a high-tech corridor by integrating homes and jobs
- 8 - Expanding a growth area around transport nodes

## Methodology

Note - the appraisal of the strategic spatial options is based on the interim draft findings of the Landscape Character Assessment, which is a work in progress. The conclusions are therefore preliminary and will need to be verified once the study is further developed.

Taking into account the interim draft findings of the emerging Landscape Character Assessment study where appropriate, CBA has undertaken a high level comparative review of the potential landscape and townscape character considerations of the strategic (non-site specific) spatial options and growth scenarios that are being tested as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process.

Where appropriate, the analysis identifies the Landscape Character Types that provide the landscape setting and context for each of the strategic spatial options and summarises the key sensitivities of the landscape from the interim draft Landscape Character Assessment.

The potential landscape (or townscape) effects of the strategic spatial option are identified for the minimum growth scenario. The additional effects likely to occur from the medium and maximum growth scenarios are then identified.

The analysis also provides recommendations for strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement for each of the strategic spatial options. Specific mitigation would be required as part of more detailed studies in locating and designing future development.

## Analysis Table

Strategic Spatial Option 1: Focus on Densification of existing urban areas	
<p>This approach would focus new homes and jobs within Cambridge, because it is the main urban area and centre for services and facilities. The primary location for development within the urban area is at <b>North East Cambridge</b>: the last major brownfield site within Cambridge urban area is at North East Cambridge which is being taken forward separately via an Area Action Plan.</p>	
Growth Scenarios	High Level Landscape & Townscape Character Considerations
<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North East Cambridge</li> <li>Cambridge Urban Area (low density)</li> </ul>	<p>The capacity of existing urban areas to accommodate growth on previously developed brownfield land without weakening distinctive local townscape characteristics/features is a key consideration, as are potential changes to key views and the landscape setting of the City experienced in approaches to and from the Cambridge Urban Area, particularly where tall buildings are proposed associated with densification. It is noted that a Strategic Heritage Impact Assessment study is being commissioned that will inform testing of impacts from this growth option on historic townscape character and views at a later stage of the Local Plan process.</p> <p>In addition to the Cambridge Urban Area, the landscape types that provide the setting and context for growth focussed around North East Cambridge are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Fen Edge Claylands</b> to the north - the peaceful, rural, open character of the landscape, surviving traditional orchards, pockets of high ecological value landscape features and the historic linear villages are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>The <b>Cam River Valley</b> extending north-eastwards to the <b>Fens</b> - the tranquil, intimate landscape and dense scattering of trees and scrub and small-scale pastoral fields along the river courses are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> </ul>

	<p>The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating urban extensions on the edge of Cambridge into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct rural character and separate identity of the outlying villages</li> <li>• Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in long, open views across the Fen Edge Claylands and intimate Cam River Valley landscapes</li> <li>• Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting developments to the surrounding urban edge countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul> <p>By focusing on the use of brownfield land to accommodate growth, this growth scenario is likely to result in more limited changes to distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the medium growth scenario, which involves additional supply focussing on greenfield land.</p>
<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• Cambridge Urban Area (medium density)</li> <li>• Cambridge Airport</li> <li>• Edge of Cambridge in Green Belt (one site/broad location)</li> </ul>	<p>The considerations for North East Cambridge under the minimum growth scenario are also applicable to this scenario.</p> <p>Increased densification of the Cambridge Urban Area is likely to include the potential for additional tall buildings, which could further alter the townscape of Cambridge and may have greater impacts on open views across the surrounding landscape towards Cambridge compared to the minimum growth scenario.</p>

	<p>The considerations for Cambridge Airport (Option 2) are also applicable to this scenario.</p> <p>Urban extensions on the edge of Cambridge on greenfield land are likely to result in landscape changes that may harm distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development, and also has potential for reducing countryside gaps separating the Cambridge Urban Area and the necklace of surrounding villages.</p>
<p>Maximum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• Cambridge Urban Area (high density)</li> <li>• Cambridge Airport</li> </ul>	<p>The considerations for North East Cambridge under the minimum growth scenario are also applicable to this scenario.</p> <p>Increased densification of the Cambridge Urban Area is likely to include the potential for additional tall buildings, which could further alter the townscape of Cambridge and may have greater impacts on open views across the surrounding landscape towards Cambridge compared to the medium growth scenario.</p> <p>The considerations for Cambridge Airport (Option 2) are also applicable to this scenario.</p>

Strategic Spatial Option 2: Focus on Edge of Cambridge - outside Green Belt	
This approach would create new homes and jobs in extensions on the edge of Cambridge, using land not in the green belt. The only large site on the edge of Cambridge not in the Green Belt is <b>Cambridge Airport</b> .	
Growth Scenarios	High Level Landscape & Townscape Character Considerations
<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cambridge Airport</li> <li>North East Cambridge</li> <li>One Village site</li> </ul>	<p>The Fen Edge Chalklands landscape type to the east of Cambridge provides the landscape setting and context for growth focussed around Cambridge Airport. The peaceful, rural open character of the landscape, long open views across the landscape towards Cambridge, scattered features of ecological and historic value, and traditional vernacular and linear form of village settlements are inherent sensitivities of the Fen Edge Chalklands landscape that are vulnerable to change.</p> <p>Due to the open character of the Fen Edge Chalklands landscape context for Cambridge Airport, it is likely that the new urban edge would be a prominent feature in the landscape.</p> <p>The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating an urban extension on the edge of Cambridge into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain a strategic countryside gap to protect the distinct rural character and separate identity of the villages to the east of Cambridge (including Teversham, Little/Great Wilbraham)</li> <li>Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in long, open views across the Fen Edge Chalklands landscape</li> <li>Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting developments on the edge of Cambridge to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul>

	<p>The considerations for North East Cambridge (Option 1) are also applicable to this growth scenario.</p> <p>By focusing predominantly on the use of brownfield land to accommodate growth, this minimum growth scenario is likely to result in more limited changes that may harm distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the medium and maximum growth scenarios, which involve additional supply focussing on greenfield land.</p>
<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cambridge Airport</li> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• Two smaller new settlements of 4,500 dwellings on public transport corridors</li> <li>• Balance spread across the Rural Centre (30%) and Minor Rural Centres (70%) outside of the Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>This medium growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with new settlements and rural villages to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may harm distinctive local landscape and townscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the minimum growth scenario.</p>

<p>Maximum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cambridge Airport</li><li>• North East Cambridge</li><li>• One larger new settlement of 9,000 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li><li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li></ul>	<p>This maximum growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with new settlements to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may cause greater harm to distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the medium growth scenario.</p>
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### Strategic Spatial Option 3: Focus on Edge of Cambridge - Green Belt

This approach would create new homes and jobs in **extensions on the edge of Cambridge**, involving release of land from the Green Belt

<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge of Cambridge – Green Belt (equivalent to three sites/broad locations)</li> </ul>	<p>The landscape types that provide the setting and context for growth focussed on the edge of Cambridge are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Fen Edge Claylands</b> to the north – the peaceful, rural, open character of the landscape, surviving traditional orchards, pockets of high ecological value landscape features and the historic, linear village cores are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>• The Cam <b>River Valley</b> extending north-eastwards to the Fens and southwards – the tranquil, intimate landscape, and the dense scattering of trees and scrub and small-scale pastoral fields along the river courses are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>• The <b>Fen Edge Chalklands</b> to the east – the peaceful, rural open character of the landscape, long open views across the landscape towards Cambridge, scattered features of ecological and historic value, and traditional vernacular and linear form of village settlements are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>• The <b>Chalk Hills</b> to the south-east – the distinctive, elevated and undeveloped hills and ridges, open, panoramic views across Greater Cambridge and beyond, scattered woodland including ancient woodland on summits and slopes, and the tranquil often remote landscape character are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>Lowland Claylands</b> to the south-west – the rural tranquillity, scattered pattern of small woodlands, surviving moated sites and the dispersed, rural settlement pattern are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</p>
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- The **Wooded Claylands** to the west – the rural tranquillity, distinctive pattern of hedgerows and woodland including parkland estates, rural settlement pattern of vernacular villages and dispersed farms, and long, framed views from elevated landform are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.

The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating urban extensions on the edge of Cambridge into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:

- Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct rural character and separate identity of the outlying necklace of villages surrounding Cambridge (including Waterbeach, Teversham, Little Wilbraham, Great Wilbraham, Great Shelford, Little Shelford, Hauxton, Grantchester, Coton, Girton, Histon, Milton)
- Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in views across the adjacent landscape types
- Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting developments on the edge of Cambridge to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)

By focusing on the use of greenfield land to accommodate growth, this option is likely to result in (i) larger scale landscape changes that may harm distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development; while (ii) minimising changes that may harm distinctive local townscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development.

<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge of Cambridge – Green Belt (equivalent to five sites/broad locations)</li> <li>• Balance within Cambridge urban area</li> </ul>	<p>This medium growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with urban extensions on the edge of Cambridge and on brownfield land within the Cambridge Urban Area to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may cause greater harm to distinctive local landscape and townscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the minimum and maximum growth scenarios.</p>
<p>Maximum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edge of Cambridge – Green Belt (equivalent to five sites/broad locations)</li> </ul>	<p>This maximum growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with urban extensions on the edge of Cambridge to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may cause greater harm to distinctive local landscape and townscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the minimum and medium growth scenarios.</p>

Strategic Spatial Option 4: Focus on New settlements	
New settlements would <b>establish a whole new town or village</b> , providing homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure in a new location, and would need to be supported by strategic transport infrastructure connecting to Cambridge	
<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two smaller new settlements of 4,500 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li> </ul>	<p>The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new settlements into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct character and separate identity of surrounding villages and the Cambridge Urban Area</li> <li>Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in views across adjacent landscape types</li> <li>Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting new settlements to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul> <p>By focusing on the use of greenfield land to accommodate growth in new towns or villages, this option is likely to result in larger scale landscape changes that may harm distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development, while limiting changes to existing settlements that may harm distinctive local townscape characteristics/features compared to other spatial options.</p> <p>The capacity of different landscape types to accommodate new settlements will vary across the Greater Cambridge area subject to the vulnerability/susceptibility of their specific characteristics to this form of built development. In general terms, the Fens, River Valley and Chalk Hills are considered to be more vulnerable/susceptible to changes from new settlements than other landscape types within Greater Cambridge.</p>

<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three new settlements on public transport corridors (two larger new settlements of 9,000 dwellings and one smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings)</li> <li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on the road network</li> </ul>	<p>This medium growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with new settlements to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may cause greater harm to distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the minimum growth scenario.</p>
<p>Maximum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three new settlements on public transport corridors (two larger new settlements of 9,000 dwellings and one smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings)</li> <li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on the road network</li> <li>• Built at a higher delivery rate than the medium growth scenario</li> </ul>	<p>This maximum growth scenario includes additional supply focussing on greenfield land associated with new settlements to accommodate growth, which is likely to result in changes that may cause greater harm to distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the minimum growth scenario.</p>

Strategic Spatial Option 5: Focus on Dispersal – villages	
This approach would spread new homes and jobs out to the <b>villages</b> .	
<p>Minimum, Medium &amp; Maximum Growth Scenarios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% of balance at Rural Centres</li> <li>• 40% of balance at Minor Rural Centres</li> <li>• 17% of balance at Group villages</li> <li>• 3% of balance to find at Infill villages</li> </ul>	<p>The capacity of existing rural villages to accommodate growth without weakening distinctive local landscape or townscape characteristics/features is a key consideration, as are potential changes to key views experienced in approaches to and from the villages. The villages within the Greater Cambridge area vary considerably in size and character reflecting their landscape type setting/context and historical development. While some of the larger villages have distinctive historic cores, the overall townscape character of these settlements is often dominated by extensive late 20th Century development. In contrast, the townscape character of many of the smaller villages is dominated by their distinctive historic cores with more limited late 20th Century development.</p> <p>The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating growth on greenfield land around the edges of villages into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct character and separate identity of the rural villages</li> <li>• Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development on edges of villages as experienced in the wider landscape</li> <li>• Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting villages to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul>

	<p>Where the focus is on infill development to accommodate growth, the provision of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating built development sensitively into the townscape character of the villages would also be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such measures should be informed by the building and landscape design principles identified by the 2010 South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide SPD, and any successor documents, and also the relevant Village Design Guides published by South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2020 and emerging Neighbourhood Plans where available.</p>
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Strategic Spatial Option 6: Focus on public transport corridors	
This approach would focus homes and jobs along key <b>public transport corridors and around transport hubs</b> , extending out from Cambridge. This could be by expanding or intensifying existing settlements, or with more new settlements.	
<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li> <li>• Balance spread across 18 villages sited along existing or proposed public transport corridors</li> </ul>	<p>Focusing new settlement along existing public transport corridors would be likely to concentrate the urbanising impact upon the rural character of the Greater Cambridge landscape. Expansion of existing villages could result in the coalescence of settlements along the public transport corridors.</p> <p>The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new settlements and growth on greenfield land around the edges of villages into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct character and separate identity of the rural villages</li> <li>• Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in views across adjacent landscape types</li> <li>• Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting new settlements to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul> <p>The considerations for North East Cambridge (Option 1) are also applicable to this growth scenario.</p> <p>This minimum growth scenario focussing on new settlements along public transport corridors would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that contribute to the character of the Greater Cambridge landscape, compared to the other scenarios for this option.</p>

<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• One larger new settlement of 9,000 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li> <li>• Balance spread across 18 villages sited along existing or proposed public transport corridors</li> </ul>	<p>The medium growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape than the minimum growth scenario – including potentially on the landscape setting of rural historic villages along the public transport corridors – as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land.</p>
<p>Maximum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> <li>• One larger new settlement of 9,000 dwellings on a public transport corridor</li> <li>• Balance spread across 18 villages sited along existing or proposed public transport corridors</li> <li>• Built at a higher delivery rate than the medium growth scenario</li> </ul>	<p>The maximum growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape than the minimum growth scenario – including potentially on the landscape setting of rural historic villages along the public transport corridors – as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land.</p>

<p>Strategic Spatial Option 7: Supporting a high-tech corridor by integrating homes and jobs – southern cluster</p> <p>This approach would focus new homes close to existing and committed jobs within the <b>life sciences cluster area around the south of Cambridge</b>, including homes at existing villages and at new settlements.</p>	
<p>Minimum Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on a public transport corridor within the southern cluster area</li> <li>• Balance distributed equally across the five villages located within the southern cluster area that are on public transport corridors</li> </ul>	<p>The landscape types that provide the setting and context for growth focussed within the life sciences cluster area around the south of Cambridge are the Lowland Claylands, the Cam River Valley and the Chalk Hills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Lowland Claylands</b> – the rural tranquillity, scattered pattern of small woodlands, surviving moated sites and the dispersed, rural settlement pattern are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>• The <b>Cam River Valley</b> – the tranquil, intimate landscape, and the dense scattering of trees and scrub and small-scale pastoral fields along the river courses are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> <li>• The <b>Chalk Hills</b> – the distinctive, elevated and undeveloped hills and ridges, open, panoramic views across Greater Cambridge and beyond, scattered woodland including ancient woodland on summits and slopes, and the tranquil often remote landscape character are inherent sensitivities of this landscape that are vulnerable to change.</li> </ul> <p>By focussing growth around a new settlement and expansion of existing villages in the southern cluster area, this could lead to coalescence of settlements, potential harm to local landscape and townscape characteristics/features and key views as experienced in views from the Gog Magog Chalk Hills that frame the landscape to the south of Cambridge.</p> <p>This spatial option would concentrate urban development in a single location, reducing the urbanising impact of development across the wider Greater Cambridge landscapes as a whole.</p>

The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new settlements and growth on greenfield land around the edges of villages into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:

- Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct character and separate identity of surrounding villages and the Cambridge Urban Area
- Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in views across adjacent landscape types
- Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting new settlements to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)

<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One smaller new settlement of 4,500 dwellings on a public transport corridor within the southern cluster area</li><li>• Balance spread equally across five villages sited along existing/proposed public transport corridors within the southern cluster area (70%), and further villages within the southern cluster area not on public transport corridors (including Group villages 20% and Infill villages 10%)</li></ul>	<p>The medium growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the landscape south of Cambridge than the minimum growth scenario as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land around villages in the southern cluster.</p>
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<b>Maximum Growth Scenario</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One larger new settlement of 9,000 dwellings on a public transport corridor within the southern cluster</li><li>• Balance spread equally across the five villages sited at existing/proposed public transport nodes within the southern cluster</li><li>• Cambridge Airport</li><li>• North East Cambridge</li></ul>	The maximum growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the landscape south of Cambridge than the medium growth scenario as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land for a larger new settlement within the southern cluster, plus additional sources of supply on brownfield land for Cambridge Airport (see Option 2) and North East Cambridge (see Option 1).
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### Strategic Spatial Option 8: Expanding a growth area around transport nodes

This approach would focus new homes at **Cambourne and along the A428 public transport corridor**, on the basis that Cambourne is due to be served by a new East West Rail station and that Cambourne and the villages along the corridor are due to be served by the Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro.

#### Minimum Growth Scenario

- Expansion of Cambourne by the equivalent of one smaller new settlement (completions and commitments + 4,500 dwellings = 11,300 dwellings)
- Balance spread across three villages sited along the A428 public transport corridor

The **Wooded Claylands** landscape type provides the setting and context for growth focussed at Cambourne and villages along the A428 public transport corridor to the west of Cambridge. The rural tranquillity, distinctive pattern of hedgerows and woodland including parkland estates, rural settlement pattern of vernacular villages and dispersed farms, and long, framed views from elevated landform are inherent sensitivities of the Wooded Claylands landscape that are vulnerable to change.

Expansion of Cambourne and villages along the A428 public transport corridor could result in the coalescence of settlements along the public transport corridors. This spatial option would concentrate urban development in a single location, reducing the urbanising impact of development across the wider Greater Cambridge landscapes as a whole.

The provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new settlements and growth on greenfield land around the edges of villages into the surrounding countryside would be a key policy consideration for the new Local Plan. Such an approach is likely to be based on the following principles:

- Maintain strategic countryside gaps to protect the distinct character and separate identity of the rural villages
- Create a strong landscape structure to screen/soften built development as experienced in views across adjacent landscape types

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the character of linear landscape features to create biodiverse and accessible green corridors connecting new settlements to the surrounding countryside (informed by the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study)</li> </ul>
<p>Medium Growth Scenario</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of Cambourne by the equivalent of one smaller new settlement (completions and commitments + 4,500 dwellings = 11,300 dwellings)</li> <li>Balance spread across three villages sited along the A428 public transport corridor (60%) and four further Minor Rural Centre/ Group villages within 5km of Cambourne (40%)</li> </ul>	<p>The medium growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the character of the Wooded Clayland landscapes than the minimum growth scenario as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land around villages within 5km of Cambourne.</p>

<p><b>Maximum Growth Scenario</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of Cambourne by the equivalent of one larger new settlement (completions and commitments + 9,000 dwellings = 15,800 dwellings)</li> <li>• Balance spread across three villages sited along the A428 public transport corridor (60%) and one Minor Rural Centre and three Group villages within 5km of Cambourne (40%)</li> <li>• Cambridge Airport</li> <li>• North East Cambridge</li> </ul>	<p>The maximum growth scenario is likely to have greater impacts on the character of the Wooded Clayland landscapes than the medium growth scenario as it includes additional sources of supply on greenfield land for a larger new settlement, plus additional sources of supply on brownfield land for Cambridge Airport (see Option 2) and North East Cambridge (see Option 1).</p>
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## Preliminary Conclusions

Taking into account the interim draft findings of the emerging Landscape Character Assessment study where appropriate, the above table sets out a high level comparative analysis of the potential landscape and townscape character considerations of the strategic (non-site specific) spatial options and growth scenarios that are being tested as part of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process. The preliminary conclusions from this analysis are outlined below.

### Overall

Overall, all of the strategic spatial options and growth scenarios would result in changes, both negative and positive, in terms of conserving and enhancing the character of Greater Cambridge's landscapes and townscapes, maintaining local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place.

### Option 1: Focus on Densification of existing urban areas

In addition to the historic townscape characteristics of the Cambridge Urban Area, the Fen Edge Claylands and the Cam River Valley extending northwards to the Fens provide the setting and context for growth focussed around North East Cambridge.

The minimum growth scenario focussing on the regeneration of brownfield land in North East Cambridge and the Cambridge Urban Area would result in limited impacts on distinctive local townscape characteristics/features and key views that contribute to the distinctive historic character and landscape setting of Cambridge, and limited impacts on the wider Greater Cambridge landscape considered as a whole, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

The medium and maximum growth scenarios are likely to have greater impacts on the townscape and wider landscape setting of Cambridge as they include higher densities that could introduce taller buildings within the Cambridge Urban Area and additional sources of supply on greenfield land.

### Option 2: Focus on Edge of Cambridge - outside Green Belt

Due to the open character of the Fen Edge Chalklands landscape context for Cambridge Airport, it is likely that the new urban edge would be a prominent feature in the landscape and require provision of appropriate strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures.

By focusing predominantly on the use of brownfield land to accommodate growth, this minimum growth scenario is likely to result in more limited changes that may harm distinctive local landscape characteristics/features of the Fen Edge Chalklands that are particularly vulnerable to changes from built development compared to the medium and maximum growth scenarios, which involve additional supply focussing on greenfield land.

### Option 3: Focus on Edge of Cambridge - Green Belt

Use of greenfield land on the edge of the Cambridge Urban Area could result in landscape changes that would alter the setting of the city, particularly in relation to the historic core.

This option is non-site specific in terms of location of development. However, in general terms, the Fens (to the north-east and east), the Cam River Valley to the north-east and south-west), the eastern part of the Western Claylands and Lowland Claylands (to the west) and the Gog Magog Chalk Hills (to the south) have sensitive landscape characteristics that are likely to be particularly vulnerable/susceptible to changes from major urban extensions than other landscape types around the edge of Cambridge.

The minimum growth scenario for expansion of the Cambridge Urban Area would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features and key views that contribute to the distinctive historic character and landscape setting of Cambridge, and also have more limited impacts on the wider Greater Cambridge landscape considered as a whole, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

As they include additional sources of supply on greenfield land, the medium and maximum growth scenarios are likely to have greater impacts on the wider landscape setting of Cambridge – including potentially on key views of the City (such as from the Gog Magog Hills and Wimpole Ridge) and from an increased sense of coalescence with the necklace of rural villages surrounding Cambridge.

### Option 4: Focus on New settlements

This option is non-site specific in terms of location of development. However, in general terms, the Fens, River Valley and Chalk Hills have sensitive landscape characteristics that are likely to be more vulnerable/susceptible to changes from new settlements than other landscape types within Greater Cambridge.

By focussing on new settlements to accommodate growth, this spatial option provides opportunities for high quality and distinctive housing design that is responsive to local character and creates a strong sense of place through a comprehensive masterplanning process based on 21<sup>st</sup> century settlement planning principles (including sustainable building and urban design, landscaping and green infrastructure provision).

The minimum growth scenario focussing on new settlements would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that contribute to the character of the Greater Cambridge landscape, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

The medium and maximum growth scenarios are likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape – including potentially on the landscape setting of rural historic villages – as they include additional sources of supply on greenfield land.

### Option 5: Focus on Dispersal – villages

In general terms, the smaller villages dominated by historic cores with distinctive landscape settings have sensitive townscape/landscape characteristics that are likely to be more vulnerable/susceptible to changes from growth than, typically, the larger villages within Greater Cambridge where their character is dominated by 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century peripheral estate development.

The minimum growth scenario focussing on dispersal of growth to the villages would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local characteristics/features that contribute to the distinctive historic character and landscape setting of Greater Cambridge's rural villages, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

### Option 6: Focus on Public transport corridors

The minimum growth scenario focussing on new settlements on public transport corridors would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that contribute to the character of the Greater Cambridge landscape, compared to the other scenarios for this option. New development should minimise linear ribbon development along transport routes in order to reduce coalescence of settlements and maintain strategic countryside gaps.

The medium and maximum growth scenarios are likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape – including potentially on the landscape setting of rural historic villages along the public transport corridors – as they include additional sources of supply on greenfield land.

### Option 7: Supporting a High-tech corridor by integrating homes and jobs – southern cluster

In general terms, the River Valley and Chalk Hills have sensitive landscape characteristics that are likely to be more vulnerable/susceptible to changes from development focussed on the southern cluster than the Lowland Claylands landscape type within this part of Greater Cambridge.

Focussing growth in a single location would reduce landscape changes across the wider Greater Cambridge landscape. However, it could lead to adverse impacts upon distinctive, local landscape characteristics and features.

The minimum growth scenario focussing on the southern cluster would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that contribute to the character of the Greater Cambridge landscape, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

The medium and maximum growth scenarios focussing on the southern cluster are likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape as they include additional sources of supply on greenfield land.

### Option 8: Expanding a growth area around transport nodes

In general terms, the Wooded Claylands landscape type is considered to offer potential opportunities to accommodate growth focussing on the expansion of Cambourne along the A428 public transport corridor to the west of Cambridge.

The minimum growth scenario would result in more limited impacts on distinctive local landscape characteristics/features that contribute to the character of the Greater Cambridge landscape, compared to the other scenarios for this option.

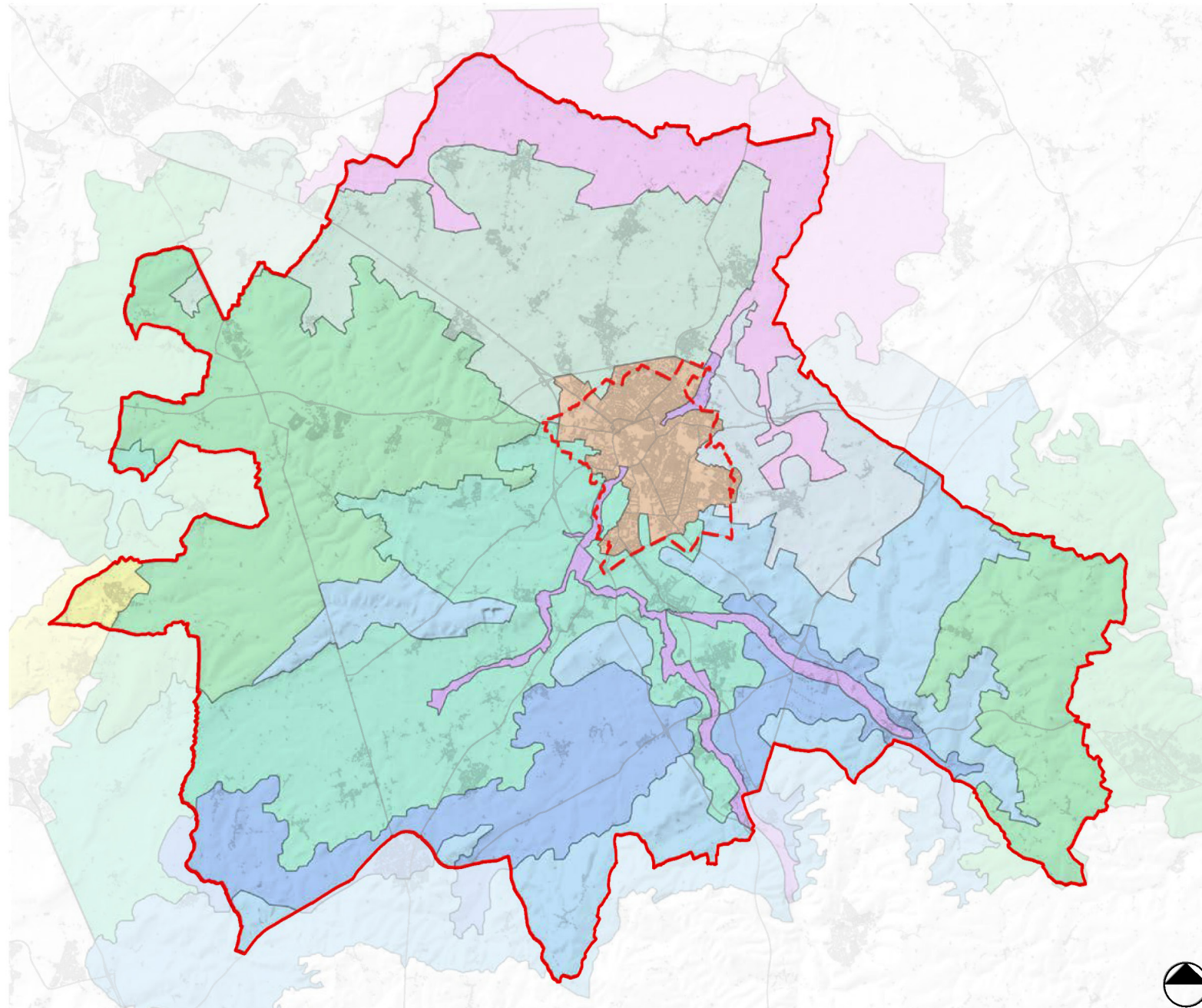
The medium and maximum growth scenarios are likely to have greater impacts on the Greater Cambridge landscape as they include additional sources of supply on greenfield land.

## Recommendations

### Policy Mitigation

For all options, it would be advisable to consider developing suitable landscape policies in the new Local Plan that require provision of strategic landscape mitigation and enhancement measures for integrating new development around the edges of Cambridge and rural villages in South Cambridgeshire into the surrounding countryside. The policy approach should be informed and supported by the relevant landscape management objectives and landscape planning guidelines identified by the new Greater Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment, taking into account the principles highlighted in the above table as appropriate and in line with the emerging Greater Cambridge Green Infrastructure Strategy.

# DRAFT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES



## KEY



**Study Area**



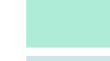
**Cambridge City Boundary**



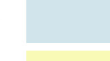
Fens



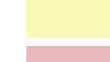
Fen Edge Claylands



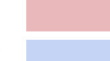
Lowland Claylands



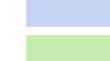
Wooded Claylands



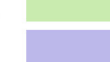
Wooded Greensand Ridge



Fen Edge Chalklands



Chalk Hills



Lowland Chalklands



River Valleys



Cambridge Urban Area

**Source:**  
CBA 2020

